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Rotary District Scholar Report
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As I become more entrenched in my life in Rio de Janeiro, time only seems to speed forward. October kept me busy with Rotary projects, expanded duties within Green My Favela, and keeping up with Brazil's national elections. On October 12th, Brazil celebrates Dia da Criança, Day of the Child. No holiday in the United States compares to Day of the Child, a day (*or week*) when children are revered and reminded of their uniqueness and then, given presents as if it were Christmas. Rotary Club São Conrado, my sponsoring club in Rio de Janeiro, held their annual Festa das Crianças for students in a favela school. Over 300 children saw a magic show and enjoyed snacks during the celebration. I attended the party, helped with plans, and took pictures during the festivities. At first to me the magician seemed a bit corny and I wondered why the Club had not invested in a more "impactful" event. As the kids left the party though, they were so grateful, and I realized my preconceived idea of what qualified as impactful. The students that attended this school in Vidigal, a favela of Rio de Janeiro, probably do not have more than a simple celebration of Dia da Criança in their homes. Eating hot dogs and pizza to their heart's content is a rarity for them, when meat may not be a staple in their diets at home. Rotary São Conrado sponsored a joyous occasion that brightened many of the children's day and gave them a good meal. Serving as a Rotary Scholar has showed me that not every good need or humanitarian project requires a planned global impact; just making a difference in an individual's life can affect the globe.

I continue working with Green My Favela. In September and October, I managed all garden volunteers and projects while the Director traveled to conferences in Canada and Europe. The director reported upon her return that our methodology of letting the residents determine the course of the urban garden has been well received by the development professionals at the conferences. Few organizations working with degraded land in urban communities seem to trust the residents to determine the best use for space. With a little guidance and leading by example – meaning foreigners do manual labor tasks, Green My Favela has nurtured a thriving a garden that provides vegetables for an estimated 300 people. Currently, Green My Favela is also hosting filmmakers creating a

documentary on social entrepreneurship for the United Nations. I have enjoyed immensely sharing my studies with them and hearing of other global projects. This month, I am visiting other favelas with the director to consider other possible garden sites and help her research degraded land in Rio de Janeiro.

This month, Brazil reelected President Dilma Rousseff to a second term. I found the campaign and election process fascinating. First, Brazil has a multi-party system, and the government grants each party and candidate TV ads. Mandatory political hours happened twice a day on the largest cable network in Brazil during the two months prior to the election. Campaigns for each office begin on the same day and can only last until the election. Voting is obligatory in Brazil. I had the privilege of going to vote with my Rotary counselors, and they both voted for all candidates in less than five minutes. Results are released three hours after the *urnas*, meaning polls in Portuguese, close. In the 2012 presidential election in the United States, it took me over two hours to vote. Seeing the country divide in the second round of the presidential election proved interesting, and some Brazilians felt they were choosing the least corrupt candidate rather than someone they fully supported. This past week I have fielded many questions about the Midterm elections in the United States – such as our process of voting, voting fraud and how campaigns are so expensive. These informal cultural exchanges provide me with many insights into Brazil.